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CB03-78

MANUFACTURING AND TRADE INVENTORIES AND SALES **March 2003**

NOTICE OF REVISION: Revisions to the Retail sales and inventories estimates were published April 30 and are reflected in this release. Manufacturing estimates will be revised at a later date. Revised historical data can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.census.gov/mtis/www/mtis.html>.

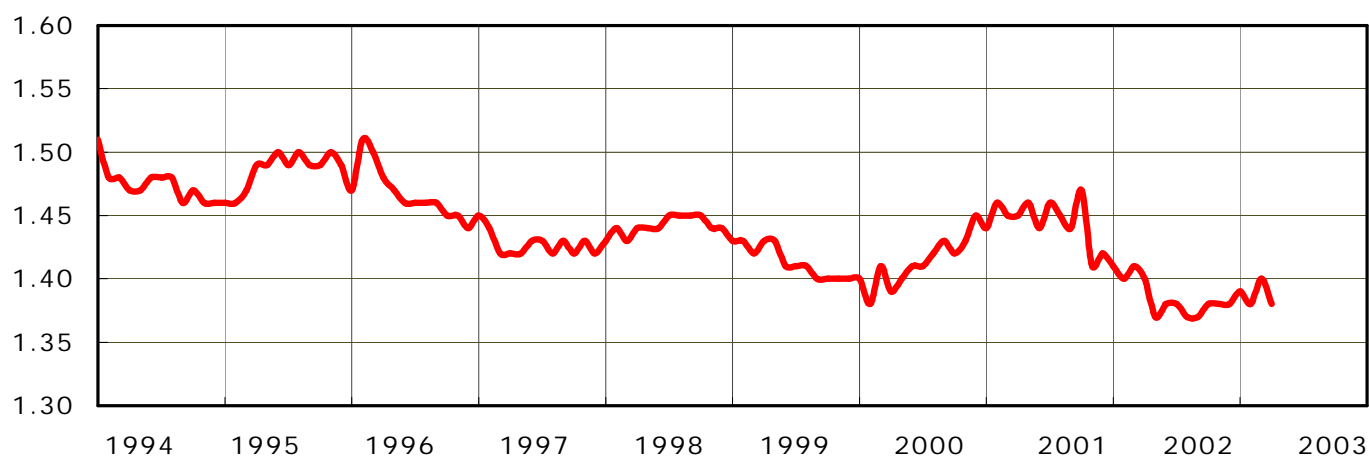
Sales. The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that the combined value of distributive trade sales and manufacturers' shipments (excluding semiconductors) for March, adjusted for seasonal and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were estimated at \$849.9 billion, up 1.8 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$) from February and were up 5.6 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$) from March 2002.

Inventories. Manufacturers' and trade inventories (excluding semiconductors) adjusted for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were estimated at an end-of-month level of \$1,171.7 billion, up 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.1\%$) from February and up 4.0 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$) from March 2002.

Inventories/Sales Ratio. The total business inventories/sales ratio based on seasonally adjusted data at the end of March was 1.38. The March 2002 ratio was 1.40.

Total Business Inventories/Sales Ratios: 1994 to 2003

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday and trading-day differences but not for price changes)



The Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales Report for April is scheduled for release June 12, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. Questions concerning this report may be addressed to: Scott Scheleur (301) 763-2713 (Retail), Dan Sansbury (301) 763-4832 (Manufacturing), or Nancy Piesto (301) 763-2747 (Wholesale). Electronic inquiries may be sent to: retail.trade@census.gov.

The wholesale and manufacturing data in this report also appear in the following monthly Census Bureau publications: Current Industrial Reports (see M3 series for manufacturers data) and Current Business Reports (see BW series for merchant wholesalers). Retail data are available on the Census website at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>. March data was released May 2 for Manufacturers and May 7 for merchant wholesalers. The data are also available the day of issue on the Internet-<http://www.census.gov/bussales> - and on Department of Commerce's STAT-USA website; for information, call (202) 482-1986.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales and Inventories for Manufacturers, Retailers, and Merchant Wholesalers
(In millions of dollars)

	Sales			Inventories ¹			Inventories/Sales Ratios		
	Mar. 2003	Feb. 2003	Mar. 2002	Mar. 2003	Feb. 2003	Mar. 2002	Mar. 2003	Feb. 2003	Mar. 2002
	(p)	(r)	(s)	(p)	(r)	(s)			
Adjusted									
Total business ³	849,875	834,860	805,070	1,171,724	1,166,786	1,126,477	1.38	1.40	1.40
Manufacturers ^{3,4}	328,721	322,601	315,593	433,103	433,227	431,434	1.32	1.34	1.37
Retailers.....	280,585	274,066	265,947	447,586	443,879	410,401	1.60	1.62	1.54
Merchant wholesalers.....	240,569	238,193	223,530	291,035	289,680	284,642	1.21	1.22	1.27
Not Adjusted									
Total business.....	864,100	770,852	825,350	1,173,121	1,166,236	1,126,359	1.36	1.51	1.36
Manufacturers ^{3,4}	344,299	309,768	332,852	430,334	435,545	428,387	1.25	1.41	1.29
Retailers.....	276,144	243,532	265,788	451,215	440,140	412,674	1.63	1.81	1.55
Merchant wholesalers.....	243,657	217,552	226,710	291,572	290,551	285,298	1.20	1.34	1.26

See footnotes and notes at the end of Table 3.

(p) Preliminary.

(r) Revised.

(s) Adjusted data were revised due to concurrent seasonal adjustment. No revisions were made to Not Adjusted data.

Table 2. Percent Changes for Sales and Inventories -- Manufacturers, Retailers, and Merchant Wholesalers

	Adjusted						Not Adjusted					
	Sales			Inventories			Sales			Inventories		
	Mar. 03/ Feb. 03	Feb. 03/ Jan. 03	Mar. 03/ Mar. 02	Mar. 03/ Feb. 03	Feb. 03/ Jan. 03	Mar. 03/ Mar. 02	Mar. 03/ Feb. 03	Feb. 03/ Jan. 03	Mar. 03/ Mar. 02	Mar. 03/ Feb. 03	Feb. 03/ Jan. 03	Mar. 03/ Mar. 02
Total business.....	1.8	-0.9	5.6	0.4	0.7	4.0	12.1	-1.2	4.7	0.6	1.1	4.2
Manufacturers.....	1.9	-1.4	4.2	0.0	0.4	0.4	11.1	3.4	3.4	-1.2	1.4	0.5
Retailers.....	2.4	-1.5	5.5	0.8	1.1	9.1	13.4	-3.6	3.9	2.5	2.0	9.3
Merchant wholesalers..	1.0	0.5	7.6	0.5	0.3	2.2	12.0	-4.8	7.5	0.4	-0.6	2.2

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, Inventories, and Inventories/Sales Ratios, By Kind of Business
(In millions of dollars)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Sales			Inventories ¹			Percent Change In Inventories			Inventories/Sales Ratios		
		Mar. 2003 (p)	Feb. 2003 (r)	Mar. 2002 (s)	Mar. 2003 (p)	Feb. 2003 (r)	Mar. 2002 (s)	Mar. 03/ Feb. 03	Feb. 03/ Jan. 03	Mar. 03/ Mar. 02	Mar. 03	Feb. 03	Mar. 02
	Adjusted ²												
	Retail trade, total.....	280,585	274,066	265,947	447,586	443,879	410,401	0.8	1.1	9.1	1.60	1.62	1.54
	Total (excl. motor veh. & parts).....	207,047	203,997	196,677	293,435	291,744	282,004	0.6	0.6	4.1	1.42	1.43	1.43
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers.....	73,538	70,069	69,270	154,151	152,135	128,397	1.3	2.1	20.1	2.10	2.17	1.85
442,3	Furniture, home furn., elect. & appl. stores..	15,513	15,091	15,338	26,246	26,302	25,174	-0.2	-0.3	4.3	1.69	1.74	1.64
444	Building materials, garden equip & supplies..	25,964	24,193	24,579	44,304	43,916	41,570	0.9	2.2	6.6	1.71	1.82	1.69
445	Food & beverage stores.....	41,955	41,812	40,842	34,495	34,355	33,827	0.4	0.5	2.0	0.82	0.82	0.83
448	Clothing & clothing access. stores.....	14,810	14,374	14,382	37,052	36,805	34,512	0.7	0.7	7.4	2.50	2.56	2.40
452	General merchandise stores.....	38,986	38,935	37,556	66,788	66,012	64,196	1.2	-0.2	4.0	1.71	1.70	1.71
4521	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.).....	18,045	18,182	19,082	37,386	36,971	39,237	1.1	-0.6	-4.7	2.07	2.03	2.06
	Not Adjusted												
	Retail trade, total.....	276,144	243,532	265,788	451,215	440,140	412,674	2.5	2.0	9.3	1.63	1.81	1.55
	Total (excl. motor veh. & parts).....	199,433	178,598	193,645	289,927	282,569	278,540	2.6	1.4	4.1	1.45	1.58	1.44
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers.....	76,711	64,934	72,143	161,288	157,571	134,134	2.4	3.2	20.2	2.10	2.43	1.86
442,3	Furniture, home furn., elect. & appl. stores..	15,002	13,554	14,913	25,564	25,118	24,519	1.8	-1.8	4.3	1.70	1.85	1.64
444	Building materials, garden equip & supplies..	24,379	19,124	22,951	46,253	44,267	43,358	4.5	5.5	6.7	1.90	2.31	1.89
445	Food & beverage stores.....	41,238	37,882	41,557	34,415	34,037	33,717	1.1	-0.8	2.1	0.83	0.90	0.81
448	Clothing & clothing access. stores.....	13,441	11,099	13,963	36,089	34,928	33,649	3.3	3.9	7.3	2.68	2.99	2.41
452	General merchandise stores.....	36,856	32,830	36,597	64,795	62,094	62,341	4.3	1.7	3.9	1.76	1.89	1.70
4521	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.).....	16,670	14,640	18,301	36,451	34,679	38,256	5.1	2.0	-4.7	2.19	2.37	2.09

(p) Preliminary (r) Revised (s) Adjusted data were revised due to concurrent seasonal adjustment. No revisions were made to Not Adjusted data.

¹ Inventories are on a non-LIFO basis as of the end of the month.

² Adjusted for seasonal variations and, in the case of sales, for trading-day differences and holiday variations. Concurrent seasonal adjustment is being used to adjust all sales, shipment and inventory estimates. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-12-ARIMA program. The factors derived from the program are applied to the current and previous month estimates and for retail and wholesale estimates a year ago as well. For retail sales, concurrent seasonal adjustment is also used to adjust the advance estimates (published one month before the preliminary estimates) and the estimates one year before the advance month. This explains the revision to retail estimates from a year ago.

³ Total business and manufacturers estimates exclude semiconductor manufacturers. The number of semiconductor manufacturers choosing not to participate in the voluntary manufacturing monthly survey has risen to a level such that the Census Bureau can no longer produce monthly estimates of semiconductor data.

⁴ Manufacturers sales refer to the value of shipments by manufacturers. The shipments data from individual manufacturers are adjusted prior to tabulation for the number of trading days as well as for any variations in the length of the reporting period.

Note: U.S. and group totals include kinds of business not shown. The Manufacturing and Trade Inventory and Sales estimates are based on data from three surveys: the Monthly Retail Trade Survey, the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey, and the Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders Survey. The sampling variability for retailers and merchant wholesalers can be used to construct a 90 percent confidence interval for the estimates. Over all possible samples, 90 percent of such intervals will cover the true estimate. These intervals are given in parentheses for the estimates on the front page. If, for example, the estimate is up 0.8 percent and the margin of sampling error is ± 1.2 percent, the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.4 percent to +2.0 percent. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. Measures of reliability for Retail and Wholesale sales and inventory levels and changes are included in the detailed monthly press releases for those industries. Manufacturers do not contribute to estimates of sampling variability because the manufacturer's mail panel is not a probability sample from a known frame and standard errors of the industry estimates cannot be calculated. Estimates from all three surveys are also subject to nonsampling errors, which can arise in any stage of the survey. Such errors include coverage error (failure to accurately represent all population units in the sample) response errors, coding errors, and nonresponse. Although no direct measurement of these errors has been obtained, precautionary steps were taken in all phases of the collection, processing, and tabulation of the data to minimize their influence.